

REBECCA COHN eNEWSLETTER

for the twenty-fourth Assembly District

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Cohn's Comment



If you've noticed more potholes on Bay Area freeways you are not alone. The problem has extended far beyond neighborhood inconveniences to become a crisis that effects commuters and hampers commercial transportation. The California Transportation Commission recently declared that California's transportation infrastructure is on the verge of collapse.

So I want to talk about a transportation plan recently proposed in the legislature that I am supporting. The promise of the California dream is the promise of opportunity. To keep that promise alive, we must fix our broken transportation system. Traffic and stalled transportation projects are a major speed bump on our road to economic recovery.

This proposal outlines a comprehensive transportation proposal to cut gas taxes and keep our state moving by improving roads and reducing traffic.

The proposal immediately cuts the price of gas at the pump by 11 cents a gallon. At the same time, it provides \$10 billion to jump-start essential transportation projects in every part of the state. This investment will give commuters the gift of more time with their families. That's priceless.

Every year, we lose billions of dollars in lost productivity thanks to the clogged arteries of our transportation system. Our economy needs the fast lane, but too often our transportation system moves goods and services at a snail's pace. For too long partisan gridlock has created traffic gridlock on our streets and highways. This legislation jumpstarts delayed projects up and down our state, including the Bay Bridge retrofit and bringing BART to San Jose.

Smaller projects will benefit as well. Locally, projects facing delays will be set back on track.

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Cohn to Host Health Faire in Willow Glen

Please join Assemblymember Rebecca Cohn at her first Health and Wellness Resource Faire aimed to help raise public awareness of the alarming rates of diabetes and obesity in children, women and seniors. The Faire will include **free** health screenings, community outreach services, health information and workshops.

Rebecca Cohn's Health & Wellness Resource Faire
Saturday, April 23, 2005, 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Willows Senior Center
2175 Lincoln Avenue, San Jose, CA

Free to the public

For more information, contact Tori Ueda at (408) 282-8920
or tori.ueda@asm.ca.gov. ♦

Cohn Helps Colon Cancer Cause

SAN JOSE – March was Colon Cancer Awareness Month and Assemblymember Rebecca Cohn joined in the efforts to raise awareness about the deadly disease. Colon cancer is the third most common type of cancer diagnosed. More than 14,000 Californians will be diagnosed with colon cancer during 2005 and nearly half will die from it.

(See Colon Cancer Free Zone, Page 3)

Cohn and Beall Host In-Home Supportive Services Hearing in Campbell

A town hall style meeting will be held on Friday, April 22nd from 3:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Campbell Community Center to discuss proposed changes to IHSS funding in the Governor's January budget proposal. The Center is located at 1 W. Campbell Avenue in Campbell and the meeting will be in the Orchard Banquet Hall. County Supervisor Jim Beall will co-host the event.

Contact Jon Kessler for more information at (408) 282-8920
or jon.kessler@asm.ca.gov. ♦

These include: widening Highway 101 to free up congestion from traffic coming from Highway 87, fixing the Coleman Avenue exit from Highway 880 to improve airport traffic, adding soundwalls to Highways 280, 680, and 880, completing the Highway 85 and Highway 87 connector, and improving CalTrain's parking, stations, and platforms.

Here's how the legislation works:

- It cuts the cost of gas at the pump immediately by 11 cents a gallon.
- It issues a \$10 billion bond for essential transportation projects and loan repayments.
- It increases general sales tax by ¼ cent to make up for the loss of sales tax on gasoline, but on the average consumers will pay less in taxes.
- For example, if you buy \$40 worth of gas you will get \$2 off, if you buy a \$40 pair of sneakers it will only cost you 10 cents more.
- It increases the current gasoline excise tax by a few cents gradually to pay off the bond. Also, we adjust the gasoline excise tax to account for inflationary effects, beginning in 2010-11. The increases in excise tax would still be less than amounts paid under sales tax.
- Finally, under the plan, Californians would see a ¼ cent cut in the sales tax beginning in 2010-11, when changes in federal estate tax law kick in—giving us new revenue.
- Overall, it provides nearly \$60 billion more for transportation over 30 years than under the Governor's budget. It is revenue neutral.

Full details of the plan will be forthcoming. Look for them at <http://democrats.assembly.ca.gov/>. Legislation is being drafted that will enact these proposals. Many of the problems they address come directly from the concerns expressed at transportation hearings around the State. I want to know what you think. Write me at Assemblymember.Cohn@assembly.ca.gov with your thoughts on transportation issues in the district. I am looking forward to hearing from you.

Yew Honored as Woman of the Year



SACRAMENTO – On March 14th, Assemblymember Cohn named Erica R. Yew, Judge of the Santa Clara County Superior Court, as the 24th Assembly District's "Woman of the Year."

The day began with a breakfast reception with Lt. Governor Cruz Bustamonte followed by a ceremony on the Assembly Floor. The Legislative Women's Caucus hosted a reception with First Lady Maria Shriver. The day concluded with a tour of the Capitol.

Yew is the first Asian-American female ever appointed to the Santa Clara County Superior Court. She has a lengthy record of community service, reflected by ten major awards of recognition. Yew currently serves on the boards of seven judicial and community organizations.

As an attorney, Yew has served as chair or board member of fifteen major community and legal organizations, and has taught for seven legal organizations and law schools.

Congratulations to Judge Erica R. Yew, the 24th Assembly District's "Woman of the Year." ♦

Proposed San Jose Baseball Site in 24th AD

SAN JOSE – Mayor Ron Gonzales announced his intention to lure Major League Baseball (MLB) to San Jose in his State of the City address in February. In the latest development in the saga of baseball in San Jose, the city has unsuccessfully ended negotiations with KB Homes for the former Del Monte Cannery site. Proponents viewed the cannery site as the top location.

With no deal in place with KB, the city must look elsewhere to house the stadium. There are two other possible sites for the proposed stadium: a conglomeration of parcels just south of the San Jose Diridon Station near the HP Pavilion and a currently undeveloped parcel on San Pedro just north of Coleman Avenue. Of these two, the site south of the train station is the leading contender. The site currently houses several small businesses which makes acquiring the land more difficult for the city. The location, however, is more central to existing transit and is in a more industrial and commercial area than the previous cannery site. The city will begin negotiations for one of the two sites shortly.

While the City forges ahead with the logistical reality of the stadium, the matter of territorial rights looms as a major hurdle yet to be overcome. Santa Clara County is part of the Giant's territory, a deal inked in the early 1990s, which would preclude any other MLB team from operating in the county. The territorial rights would have to be lifted in order for San Jose to be a legitimate option for a MLB team.

With these new developments, the divisive topic of the possibility of MLB in San Jose is once again at the top of the list of concerns for both residents and businesses. Local neighborhoods would be impacted heavily by traffic created by the proposed stadium as well as noise and light pollution. Also, the costs associated with it might drain money from an already cash-strapped City Budget. Conversely, a new stadium could be a boon to the local economy, provide a new, stable source of revenue for the City and may finally fulfill San Jose's long desire to be seen as a "Major League City." ♦

Interactive Feature: What do you think?

Assemblymember Cohn would like to know how you feel about Major League Baseball in San Jose. You can send an e-mail with "baseball" in the subject line to:

Assemblymember.Cohn@assembly.ca.gov

1. Do you want to see San Jose pursue a major league baseball team (Yes or No)?
2. What are your concerns with the proposal?
3. What questions do you have?

Cohn Partners with Senator Alquist to Protect Victims from Physical and Sexual Abuse

SACRAMENTO — Assemblymember Rebecca Cohn and Senator Elaine K. Alquist (D-Santa Clara) introduced a comprehensive package of bills this year that strengthen and provide safeguards for women and children who have been physically and sexually abused. As Chair of the Assembly Select Committee on Domestic Violence and a member of the Assembly Public Safety Committee, Cohn has made it her mission to combat domestic violence. “I am pleased and honored to have Senator Alquist, the first female Chair of the Senate Committee on Public Safety, participating in this effort to strengthen safety for victims and increase accountability for batterers,” said Cohn.

Reinforcing her role as the first female chair of the Senate Committee on Public Safety, Senator Alquist indicated that she is joining forces with Assemblymember Cohn because “Women and children deserve stronger protection. This is not only a public safety issue but also a public health issue.”

Last year in Santa Clara County, twenty-one people died as a result of domestic violence. In all twenty-one cases, relatives and friends knew something was wrong but did nothing to intervene.

The comprehensive packet contains fourteen bills that strengthen protections to victims and serve to raise public awareness of this hidden epidemic. The package also shows Cohn and Alquist’s continued commitment to their shared community by protecting women and children from violence. ♦

Colon Cancer Free Zone, continued from page 1

Fortunately, colon cancer is more than 90 percent preventable if detected early. It almost always starts with a polyp, which is a small growth on the inner lining of the colon or rectum. The American Cancer Society (ACS) recommends screening for both men and women beginning at age 50.

The local chapter of the ACS has partnered with the medical community, elected officials, civic leaders and corporations to eliminate colon cancer as public health concern. The “Colon Cancer-Free Zone” Advisory Committee, the first of its kind in the nation, was launched to increase public awareness of colon cancer and help reduce the incidence of this disease to the lowest possible rate.

Colon Cancer-Free Zone is a grassroots movement started locally to change habits and screening behaviors, similar to ACS’ smoking and breast cancer awareness campaigns. Assemblymember Cohn has enthusiastically joined the effort and recognizes the seriousness of this disease and the benefits of early detection. She sends out letters to constituents every month encouraging people to get screened. She collaborated with the ACS to create an educational brochure to send to over 30,000 households in the 24th Assembly District, targeting the at-risk population of 50- to 70-year-olds.

Assemblymember Cohn was also interviewed on “Q & A” with Roy Avila on KICU Channel 36, where she presented an official Assembly Resolution to Dr. Richard Adrouny, Co-Chair of the Advisory Committee. The Resolution recognized all of the positive work the committee has done in our community. Currently, there are over 20 Zones, including the County of Santa Clara, City of Saratoga, City of Campbell, Good Samaritan Hospital, St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church, and One Hundred Black Men of Silicon Valley.

How you can start a zone:

Becoming a Colon Cancer-Free Zone is simple – it requires an official declaration by a city, organization, business, church, etc. and promotion about colon cancer and early detection; a dedication to the prevention of this deadly, but highly preventable disease. The ACS offers materials and speakers to help educate members or clients within your zone.

The “Colon Cancer-Free Zone” concept is being adopted in New England and other regions of the country. The message is spreading just as our local ACS office and Advisory Committee had hoped.

For more information about colon cancer and screenings, contact: ACS at (800) ACS-2345 or visit their Web site at www.cancer.org. ♦



Attention! The “White-Gloved Marines of the Marine Corps Silent Drill Team” visited Saratoga High School. Mayor Kathleen King also pictured.

Are you at risk?

If you answer YES to any of these questions, you are an increased risk for colon cancer...

- Are you 50 or older?
- Has a doctor ever told you that you have inflammatory bowel disease?
- Has an immediate family member had colon cancer or colon polyps?
- Are you physically inactive – not getting regular exercise?
- Do you eat red meat often?

Remember, colon cancer is 90 percent preventable!

Music Piracy Bill Passes Key Hurdle

SACRAMENTO – Assemblymember Cohn's Recording Crimes bill (AB 64) passed out of the Assembly Public Safety Committee with unanimous bipartisan support, completing an important first step in the legislative process. The bill lowers the piracy felony threshold from 1,000 to 100 units for both audio recordings and audiovisual works. By stiffening penalties and raising fines as well, the bill targets pirates who have been carefully operating under the 1,000 unit threshold.

Piracy hurts everyone by diminishing the incentive to invest in the creation of music and film. It stunts the growth of the information-based economy and erodes innovation and cultural creativity. Piracy is perceived as a crime only against authors, performers, composers, musicians, record companies, distributors, wholesalers, and retailers, but ultimately it is a crime against consumers and music fans.

This is a far-reaching problem – common with our children who think that if it's on the Internet, it must be free and, at its worst, fostered around the globe by foreign governments that do not value art or recognize intellectual property rights.

The perception of piracy as a crime only affecting wealthy artists and large corporations is inaccurate. Eighty-five percent of recordings released don't generate enough revenue to cover their costs. Record companies depend heavily on the profitable fifteen percent of recordings to subsidize the less profitable types of music, to cover the costs of developing new artists, and to keep their businesses operational. Each sale by a pirate represents a lost legitimate sale.

Supportive industries suffer the affects of piracy as well; these include printers of the album jackets, the truck drivers who deliver the product to the retailer, and most noticeably the retailer. Tower Records, for example, started in Sacramento and has a store in Campbell, but is bordering on bankruptcy due to declining sales.

Consumers also lose because the shortcut savings enjoyed by pirates drive up the costs of legitimate products for everyone. Not including losses due to Internet piracy, the sale of pirate recordings exceeds \$4.2 billion worldwide.

Creative artists lose. Musicians, singers, songwriters and producers don't get the royalties and fees they've earned. Virtually all artists depend on these fees to make a living. ♦

Victim Protection Bills Pass Assembly

SACRAMENTO – Last month Assemblymember Cohn got two domestic violence protection bills, AB 99 and AB 104 off the Assembly floor and to the Senate. This is the first of many hurdles in getting these two bills signed into law.

The first bill, AB 99, increases the time limit that a domestic violence protective order can be issued from 3 years to 5 years. Currently, a victim must go back to court every 3 years to get a protective order renewed. This can be a traumatic experience for these victims if the restrained party contests the renewal, for they will have to again relive their abuse in court.

"Domestic violence isn't over when the defendant is arrested and charged or when the victim leaves. The potential for a defendant to return and continue to harass or even worse, physically hurt the victim has been played out too many times in every one of our communities and through out the State. This bill gives victims of domestic violence more security and protection from their abusers by increasing the length of time that protective orders may be issued," Assemblywoman Cohn stated.

The second bill, AB 104, requires the same judge who issued a protective order to also preside over the hearing to modify or dismiss said order. This provision will help to ensure that judges have a familiarity with cases in order to make fully informed decisions. "If this was one of your family members, you would want the person deciding their safety to be as informed as possible regarding the reasons a protective order was put in place," explained Cohn. ♦

Power Surge 2005: Women's Legislative Briefing

MOUNTAIN VIEW – Assemblymember Rebecca Cohn recently spoke on a panel about how women elected officials' personal lives impact their legislative agendas.

The panel was part of a day long event, Power Surge 2005: Women's Legislative Briefing on Saturday, March 5, 2005, hosted by Assemblymember Sally Lieber. Also featured on the panel were State Senator Elaine Alquist and San Jose Vice-Mayor Cindy Chavez.

Assemblymember Cohn spoke passionately about her personal history as a victim of domestic violence and the impact that has had on her legislation. She told the attentive crowd of 150 women: "I know what it's like to be a child in a home terrorized by domestic violence. I know what it's like to live in fear for the safety of yourself and other family members because, if you try to break the silence, the threat of violence hangs over you. I know what it's like, because I was that child."

Her early experiences have profoundly affected her legislative agenda. In her first two terms in office the Assemblymember has had eighteen bills on Public Safety and Domestic Violence signed into law. This year she is continuing her commitment to the safety of her constituents by introducing fourteen bills in these areas. ♦